

Math Tools for the Right Brained Learner and Beyond...

1. Use graph paper to assist with visual spatial issues
2. Use kinesthetic teaching methods (movement while learning) such as: stress balls, exercise balls, and allowing students to stand/throw a ball or other movement while learning new concepts or repetitive info such as math facts
3. Allow gum chewing, especially during testing, to enhance emotional grounding (this stimulates the sphenoid nerve bundle at the roof of the mouth)
4. Cover all but the problem the student is working on. Right brained students tend to see the big picture (every problem on the page) and therefore become overwhelmed and shut down into fight/flight mode. By only allowing them to see one problem at a time you will help them break the work down into more manageable pieces.
5. Give the why and how behind the information; right brained students need to see emotional relevance to self in order to retain information. They like to know WHY they need to know the information and HOW they will use it in the future. Utilizing other senses is another great way for them to recall information on a long term basis - an example of that would be to teach fractions by cooking.
6. Repetition, repetition, repetition. Right brained learners require repetition in learning, especially in the math/numbers arena. Out of sight is out of mind for them so recalling information until it is automatic and reflexive greatly improves retention.
7. Calm down the fight/flight Vagus nerve response that right brain students tend to go into during learning and/or testing on concepts that are hard to grasp. While in this "fear brain," they will react somatically (physically) rather than think responsively. This can be helped by doing exercises before testing or class instruction. When you see a student begin to "shut down," physical movement is the quickest way to "re-boot" their internal computer and get them back into the rational brain space.
8. Consider the student's Dominant Learning Profile (Dr. Carla Hannaford). For example, a left eye dominant student will read from right to left rather left to right which can make reading English a challenge. It also results in transversals and reversals of numbers. The hand/eye exercises will assist with that issue as well.